THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

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21 May 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Via: Director, The Joint Staff

Subject: Chinese Nationalist Harassment of Soviet Shipping

Reference: Cable from COMTAIWANDEFCOM/US to CINCPAC, dated 15 May 1956, No. 4914

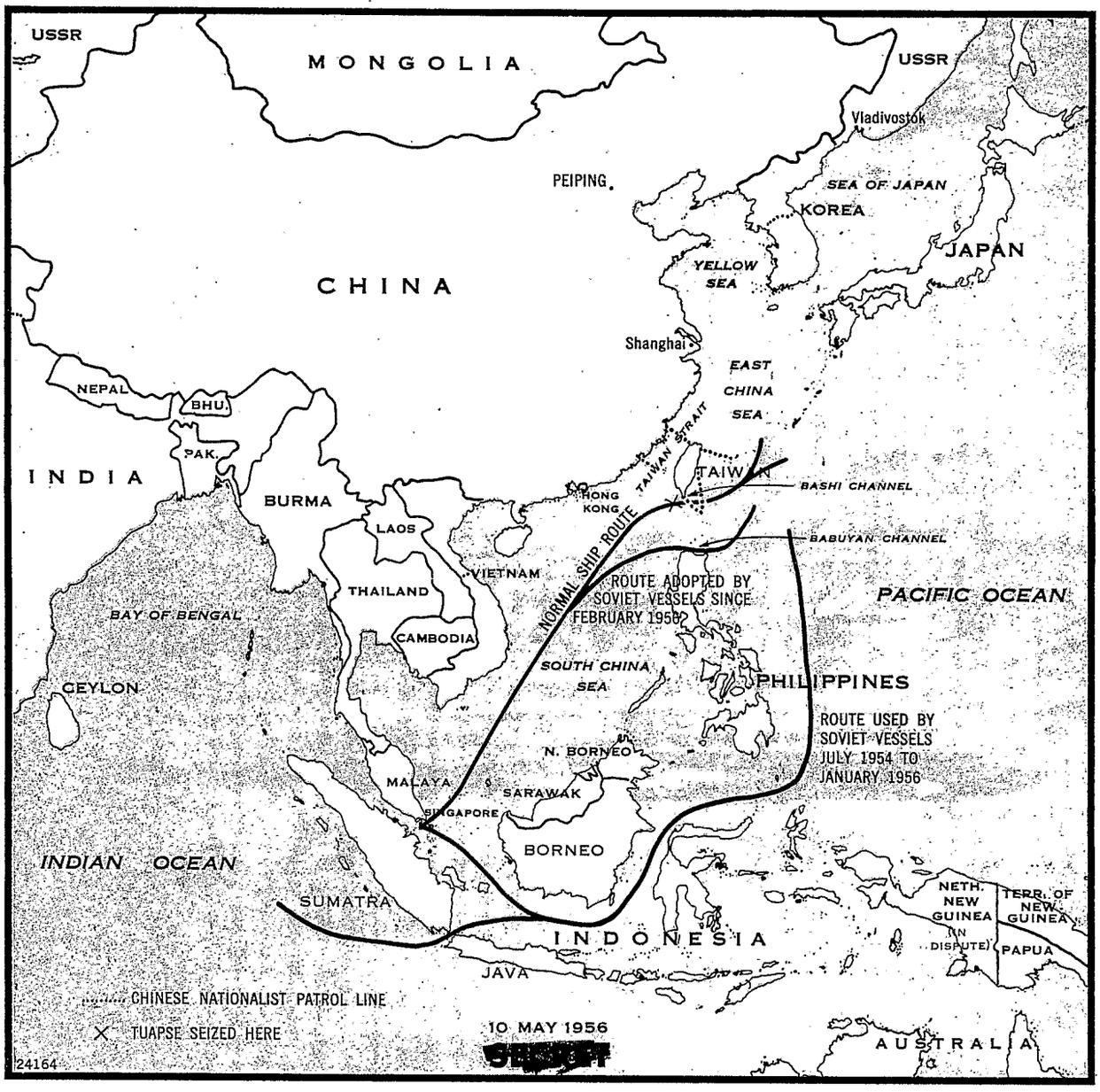
1. The attached cable refers to President Chiang's attitude toward Soviet shipping, which since February has shifted back to the South China Sea route (see attached map).

2. On the basis of an erroneous report that two Soviet merchant ships (carrying POL and rubber) had departed Singapore for Tientsin, the Ministry of National Defense ordered two DE's and two aircraft to search the Bashi Channel area. Actually, one Soviet vessel was carrying sugar to Shanghai; the other was westbound from Singapore. Patrols were ordered to identify the ships, inquire as to destination, but not to intercept, board, or fire on the vessels. No contact with Soviet vessels was made.

3. A similar attempt to harass a Swedish merchant ship on 28 March resulted in a challenge which was ignored by the Swedish vessel.

4. The attached cable shows that Chiang's original orders were to capture the vessels, adding to our belief that such action will be taken if the opportunity arises, despite MND's assurances to the contrary.

Very respectfully,

ROBERT TOTTEN
Colonel, USAF
Acting Deputy Director
for Intelligence
The Joint Staff

SOVIET SHIPPING ROUTES AND CHINESE NATIONALIST PATROLS